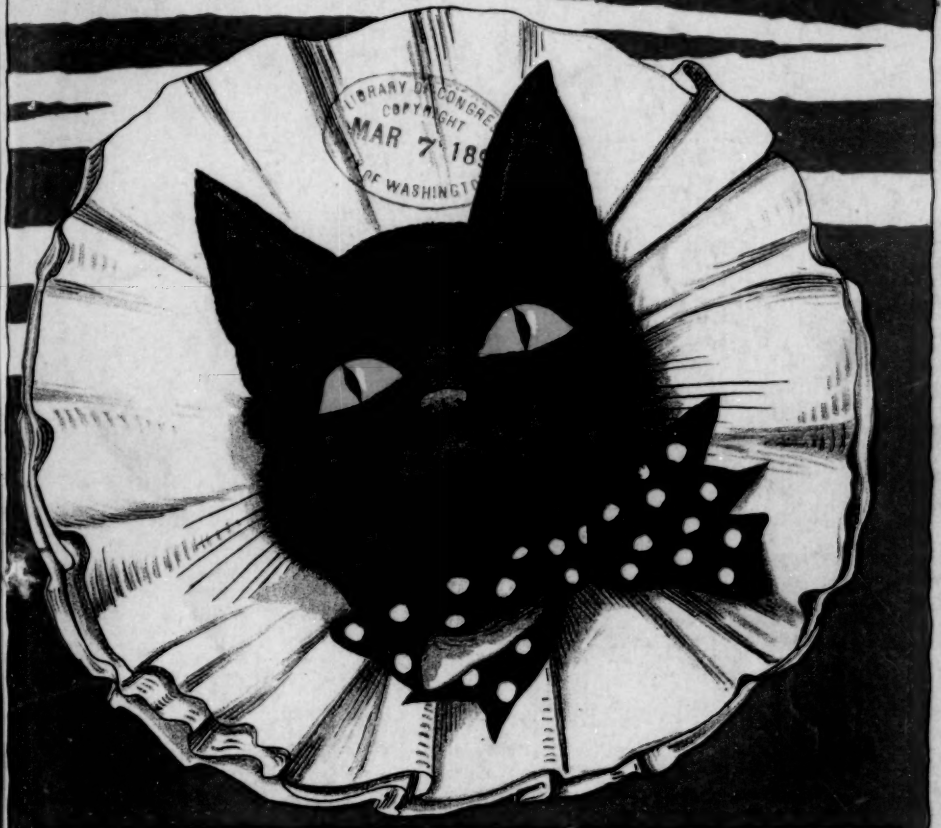
The Black Cat



April 1896.

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The Black Cat

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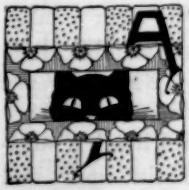
The Mystery of the Thirty Millions.

BY T. F. ANDERSON AND H. D. UMBSTAETTER.



AT eight o'clock on the morning of March 14, 1903, the Anglo-American liner, the *Oklahoma*, left her dock in North River on her regular trip to Southampton.

The fact of her departure, ordinarily of merely local interest, was telegraphed all over the United States and Canada, and even to London itself; for there was a significance attached to this particular trip such as had never before marked the sailing of an ocean steamship from these shores.

It was not because the great vessel numbered among her crowd of passengers a well-known English duke and his young bride, the grand-niece of a world-famous New York railroad magnate, that her sailing was heralded by such a blowing of trumpets, nor because she also had upon her lists the names of the august British ambassador to the United States, returning home on a brief furlough, the noted French tragedian, fresh from his American triumphs, and a score of other illustrious personages whose names were household words in a dozen countries.

The presence of all these notables was merely incidental. What made this trip of the *Oklahoma* an event of international interest was the fact that at this, the apparent climax of the great gold

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exporting movement from the United States, now continued until it had almost drained the national treasury of its precious yellow hoard, and had precipitated a commercial crisis such as never before had been experienced, the *Oklahoma* was taking to the shores of insatiate John Bull the largest lump amount of gold ever shipped upon a single vessel within the memory of man.

Not even in the memorable gold exporting year of 1893, ten years previous, had any such sum as this been sent abroad at one time.

It was not the usual paltry half million or million dollars that she was carrying away in her great strong room of steel and teak wood, but thirty million dollars' worth of shining eagles and glinting bars, hastily called across the ocean because of the adverse "balance of trade" and the temporary mistrust of American securities by the fickle Europeans.

The mere insurance premium on this vast sum was in itself a comfortable fortune. Business men wondered why such a large amount was intrusted to one steamer. Suppose she should collide in the fog and sink, as one great ship had done only a few weeks before — what would become of the insurance companies then?

Suppose some daring Napoleon of crime should hatch a startling conspiracy to seize the steamer, intimidate the crew and passengers, and possess himself of the huge treasure? "It would be a stake well worth long risks," thought some of the police officials, as they read the headlines in the evening papers.

The *Oklahoma* was a fast sailer. Her five hundred feet of length and her twelve thousand tons of displacement were made light work of by the great clanking, triple-expansion engines when their combined force of fifteen thousand horse power was brought to bear upon her twin screws. Under ordinary conditions she ought to have made port on the other side in time to let her passengers eat late dinner on the sixth day out. Incoming steamers reported a brief spell of nasty weather in mid-ocean, however, and so her failure to reach Southampton on the sixth and even the seventh day was not particularly remarked.

The great American public had been busy with other weighty matters in the interim, including a threatened secession of the silver-producing States; and the departure of this modern argosy

with her precious freight had almost passed into history. For history in the year 1903 was anything that had happened farther than a week back — a day, if it was not of overwhelming importance.

If the big ship's arrival had been cabled on the eighth day, or even early on the ninth, it would still have found the public in a comparatively calm state of mind, for the mid-Atlantic storm would naturally account for a multitude of lost hours; but when the ninth lapped over onto the tenth and the tenth onto the eleventh and twelfth, with no tidings of the tardy steamer, surprise grew into anxiety and anxiety into an international sensation.

Of course all sorts of plausible theories were advanced by the steamship agents, the newspapers, and other oracles, including that of the inevitable broken shaft; and these might have sufficed for a day or two longer had it not been for another and much more startling theory that suddenly came to the surface and threw two continents into a fever of trepidation and suspense.

It was the following announcement in a leading New York morning paper that roused excitement to fever heat: "A new and most astounding phase has come over the case of the mysteriously missing *Oklahoma*. It has just been given out from police headquarters that 'Gentleman Jim' Langwood, the noted cracksman and forger, whose ten years' sentence at Sing Sing expired only a few weeks ago, was in the city several days previous to the sailing of the *Oklahoma* and went with her as a passenger, under an assumed name. Even at that very time the central office detectives were looking for him, as a tip had been sent around that he was up to some new deviltry. One of those clever people whom nothing ever escapes had seen him go aboard almost at the last minute, and gave an accurate description of his personal appearance, which was evidently but slightly disguised.

"Langwood is probably the only criminal in the country who would ever conceive and try to execute such a stupendous undertaking, and it is something more than a suspicion on the part of the New York police that he has smuggled on board a couple of dozen well-armed desperadoes, who could easily hold the entire crew and passengers in check and make them do their bidding, for a time, at least. The idea is so replete with thrilling possibilities that the entire community stands aghast at it."

It is to be noted that the public always "stands aghast" in such a case as this; but it is more to the point just now to say that the article went on, through a column or more, to describe in minute detail the circumstances attendant upon the departure of "Gentleman Jim" even to the number and shape of the bundles he had in his arms. The famous robber was very boyish in appearance, and one of the last persons in the world whom a chance acquaintance would think of looking up in the rogues' gallery. Evidently he was "out for the stuff," in most approved stage villain style, with more millions in the stake than even Colonel Sellers, of nineteenth century fame, had ever dreamed of. Of course this theory, which was already accepted as a fact, especially in police and newspaper circles, was quickly cabled across, and created such a profound sensation on the other side that even the London papers had to give it that prominent position which is usually reserved for American cyclones, crop failures, and labor outbreaks.

Upon the phlegmatic British government it acted much like an electric shock and nearly threw the foreign office into a panic; for was not the British minister plenipotentiary himself a passenger on the ill-fated *Oklahoma*, and possibly at that very hour being butchered in cold blood by a lot of Yankee cut-throats?

The thought was too horrible for a moment's endurance, and forthwith the cablegrams began to flash thick and fast between the foreign office and the British legation at Washington.

The result was that, within a few hours after the appearance of the paragraph, one of the fastest and most powerful of her majesty's cruisers, quickly followed by a second and a third, hastily steamed from Portsmouth Roads, the three spreading out north, west, and south, like a great marine fan, as they hurried to the rescue of the *Oklahoma* and the British ambassador.

Meanwhile, at the Boston, Brooklyn, and League Island navy yards three or four of Uncle Sam's white war dogs were getting up steam for a similar errand, and a small fleet of ocean-going steamers, specially chartered by New York, Boston, and Chicago newspapers to go in search of the absent leviathan, were already threading their way through the Narrows.

Not for years had there been such world-wide interest in an

ocean expedition. The newspapers commanded an unheard of sale, for everybody was on the tiptoe of expectation concerning the fate of the missing steamer, her six hundred passengers and her thirty millions of gold.

While the public was thus feverishly awaiting the news, certain discoveries were being made by the New York police, which only went to confirm their previous suspicions. Four or five other hardened graduates from state prison were found to be absent from their accustomed haunts in the East Side slums, although known to have been in the city just before the *Oklahoma* sailed, as was "Gentleman Jim," himself.

These discoveries had their natural effect upon the public mind, and the friends of those on board the steamer began to despair of hearing that even human life had been respected by the piratical band.

As to the British foreign office, this cumulative evidence threw it into a perfect frenzy, and it was only by a miracle that a declaration of war against the United States was averted.

Three days passed by after the departure of the big searching fleets, during which time all incoming steamers reported that they had not found a single trace of the *Oklahoma* either in the northern or southern route. Vessels from the Mediterranean, the West Indies, South America, all made the same ominous report.

The tension was terrible. Thousands could not even sleep on account of the mental strain, and the minds of some of the weaker actually gave way beneath it. The public by this time was convinced beyond a reasonable shadow of doubt that the robbers had successfully carried out their fiendish plan; but how? and when? and where?

When they opened their newspapers on the morning of the eighteenth day of suspense, they found the answer to the question, and the greatest marine mystery of centuries was solved.

In the small hours of the night there had flashed across the European continent, and under the dark waters of the Atlantic, this startling message from the representative of the *Union Press Association*: —

"LISBON, April 1.— The missing *Oklahoma* is disabled at

Fayal, Azores, where she was discovered by the *Union Press* special expedition. Many of the half-starved crew and passengers are on the verge of insanity. The officers tell a most astounding story of the steamer's exciting and almost fatal adventures. On the third night out, the *Oklahoma* suddenly came under some mysterious but irresistible influence by which she was carried rapidly out of her course towards the south. Every effort was made by the officers to bring the ship back to her course, but the big liner seemed drifting helplessly at the mercy of some powerful current. The compasses were useless, and the wheel no longer exercised the slightest control over the steamer's movements.

"Naturally the anxiety of the officers was in no way diminished when on the morning of the next day, which was then the fourth day out, another vessel, — a long low-setting craft of shining steel,—was discovered off the *Oklahoma's* starboard bow, about a mile ahead, but moving in the same direction. By careful observations it was discovered that the course of the two steamers was identical. Both were apparently under the same mysterious influence. Instead of sighting a rescuer, the *Oklahoma* had, so it seemed, only discovered another victim of the irresistible current!

"Time and again the *Oklahoma* attempted to signal the companion ship, but the latter made no reply. Close observation revealed that she was built on the whaleback principle, with nothing above decks save ventilators and signal mast,—but failed to discover any sign of human being.

"By afternoon their continued failure to bring the liner back to her course had só wrought upon the minds of her officers that their anxiety infected the spirits of the passengers, who were now aroused to the real danger that menaced them.

"When the fifth day dawned, with the *Oklahoma* hundreds of miles out of the regular transatlantic course, the gravity of the situation could no longer be concealed. Distress signals were kept flying, and all possible steam was put on with the idea of overhauling the companion ship and giving or receiving aid. To the amazement of both officers and passengers, however, in spite of every effort, the *Oklahoma* failed to gain a single inch on the other vessel. Before they had time to attempt an explanation of

this remarkable fact, amazement gave way to consternation. For just a moment a third vessel had appeared on the horizon like a messenger of hope; but no sooner had she been sighted than with the swiftness of lightning the mysterious companion craft turned half around and darted away to the southeast, with the *Oklahoma* following as helplessly as though she were in tow.

"In that moment the awful truth was revealed. The steel vessel was nothing more nor less than a floating loadstone, which by some mysterious power was dragging the great ocean monster hither and thither as easily as a magnet draws a toy ship from one side to the other of a mimic pond!

"Who was she, and what was her motive? Almost before those on board had asked the question, the answer flashed upon them. The thirty millions of gold! Beyond a doubt, it was their capture which she was planning to accomplish, either by luring the *Oklahoma* from the regular path of ocean travel, and looting her and her passengers at leisure, or by compelling her to run aground upon some remote rock or shoal.

"With this revelation a new horror unveiled itself. Equipped as they were only with the supplies for a short trip across the Atlantic, the overwrought minds of many saw starvation looming up before them. That night not a soul sought his berth. From time to time consultations were held between the chief officers, and many-colored rockets spit and blazed their signals of distress incessantly across the sky.

"At length, soon after dawn of the sixth day, orders were given to bank fires and hoist sail in the hope that the *Oklahoma* as a sailing vessel might free herself from the awful influence that chained her.

"But the effort was vain. Wind and sail proved as useless as wheel and compass against the fatal power of that mysterious craft which drew the *Oklahoma* after her as irresistibly as though the two vessels were united by an unseen hawser.

"The steamer had now become a scene of indescribable horror. Mealtime, bedtime, — all the customary routine was disorganized; and daily prayer meetings were conducted among the more emotional of the passengers.

"Finally, seven days after she had left New York, the officers

of the big liner united in one last desperate effort to offset the magnetic influence of the mysterious 'pirate.' The fires were revived in the engine room, the steam pressure in all the boilers was run up to the 'blowing off' point; then, suddenly, the reversing mechanism was applied and a shudder ran through the great floating city as the twin screws began to back water.

"For a few minutes there ensued a titanic tug of war such as the beholders had never before witnessed. The water astern was lashed into a lather of foam, and for a brief moment the triumph of steam over magnetism seemed assured.

"Only for a moment, however, for the cheer that had ascended from the anxious scores on the deck of the *Oklahoma* when she slowly began to back had scarcely died away when with a mighty crash a vital section of the overtaxed engines gave way, followed by a hoarse yell of consternation from the excited engineers and stokers — and both screws were helpless and still.

"With this failure hope was well-nigh extinguished; and the *Oklahoma*, with her precious freight and her 643 human souls, abandoned all active effort to escape. With not a sail of any kind in sight, she passively rolled and plunged southward for seven days after her strange and terrible pilot, from which, to add to the horror of the situation, no human sign had yet been given. The supply of rockets was now exhausted, and food was doled out in minute portions as to members of a shipwrecked crew in order to husband supplies.

"On the afternoon of the fourteenth day, when the exhausted passengers had reached the verge of distraction, a gleam of hope appeared on the horizon in the shape of a solitary steamer, bearing down from the southwest. A glance through the telescope proved her to be a fast and formidable British cruiser, evidently en route from South America to England.

"At this news a mighty shudder, half of hope, half of fear, seized the crowd assembled upon the deck. Would the British cruiser come to their assistance, and if so, would she, too, become a victim of the magnetic craft? For a moment their fate hung in the balance; then from three hundred throats rang out a hoarse cry of joy as the mysterious craft swerved, turned sharply and shot away over the surface of the Atlantic due north.

"The spell was broken. The big liner with her six hundred human souls and thirty millions in gold was freed from the power that had for so long held her captive. But crippled as she was by the accident to her machinery she was unable to proceed unaided, and was taken in tow by the British steamer, the *Midlothian*, and a day later was brought safely into port at Fayal.

"The *Union Press* steamer is the first to bring the thrilling news. The first officer of the *Oklahoma* and the saloon passengers, including Sir Gambrel Roufe, the British ambassador, accompanied your correspondent to Lisbon. A relief steamer is urgently needed, as the *Oklahoma's* engines are both disabled, and she will not be able to proceed for several weeks.

"The passenger thought to be 'Gentleman Jim' Langwood, proves to be the Duke of Medfordshire, now on his wedding trip with his young millionaire American bride."

Hardly had the excitement caused by this startling intelligence subsided, when it was once more aroused by a despatch from Providence, R. I., announcing the capture in the act of robbing a jewelry store of "Gentleman Jim" Langwood, and a gang of four other oldtimers, and by the following even more important cablegram from the Russian representative of the *Union Press*: —

"St. Petersburg, April 2. — The identity of the mysterious craft by which the *Oklahoma* was drawn from her course has been established beyond a doubt. The vessel is a Hypnotic Cruiser, recently completed by a Russian inventor, named Slobodenski, and possessed of an electric apparatus by which any vessel can be brought completely under its control.

"Whether the Hypnotic Cruiser's bedevilment of the *Oklahoma* was merely a trial of power, or whether plunder was intended, can only be surmised. But naval lawyers say that this marvelous new invention will revolutionize naval warfare and necessitate the passage of stringent laws to cover a crime for which at present no penalty exists."

The Man at Solitaria.

BY GEIK TURNER.

SOLITARIA will be found indicated on the map by a circle half as large as that which represents Chicago. That is Solitaria as it is advertised. In reality it consists of a side-track and watering tank on the Great Western Railroad, and a little wooden box opposite, courteously called a station, which is inhabited by a man whose aim in life is to watch the side-track and telegraph along the line how it is occupied at various hours of the day and night. Just to the east the Great Western makes its only distinct curve for miles through a little piece of woods. To the west it stretches straight across the face of Indiana, mottled with a million half-burned stumps, and cut into big squares by incalculable miles of rail fence.

The man at Solitaria got to thinking it over — he had a great deal of time to do this — and he made up his mind that matters were going all wrong. In the first place, he thought he ought to be allowed more than twenty-five dollars a month for his services, and that, considering he had been running Solitaria alone for fifteen years, they ought to give him an assistant to talk to — to talk to and to allow him an occasional chance to sleep. These were, of course, entirely personal matters. But finally he made up his mind the whole thing was run wrong. It stood to reason; they never gave it any rest. Day after day and night after night they had sent freight trains and express trains, and express trains and freight trains chasing each other along the road till they had got it so it was all going to break down pretty soon,— the road, and the cars, and the men, and he himself — especially he himself; he saw that plainly. They were all going to stop short, one of these days, and fly to pieces.

Now, take himself, for instance: was it right that they should have kept running their trains by his door twenty-four hours

out of the day, and 365 days a year, for fifteen years, disturbing him and depriving him of what little sleep belonged to him? Yet all night long they persisted in sending their freights jarring and clanking by and their express trains shrieking and making up time along the level grade. He got so he knew those whistles by name — he could hear them shriek for miles and miles in either direction — coming nearer and nearer, till the train rushed by in a cloud of yellow light. Then the next one came. It was bad enough at that, but when they got to calling him names it was more than he could bear.

Besides, there was the electricity those trains kept making and storing up in his station, faster than he could ever hope to get rid of it. It was taking his life away. He went out and watched the wheels of the freight trains crunching, and grinding, and squealing by, and he could see it just rolling off and running into the station. Then nights it came stealing over him, and numbing him, just as soon as he tried to get a little sleep, which, heaven knew, he was entitled to. Anybody knows that trains running by like that, day and night, store up more electricity in a station than a man can bear, especially if he is all alone. But they paid no attention to that. He often thought he would write to the division superintendent, who had been a telegraph operator himself, and ought to think of such things, and tell him to stop it. But this plan he never carried out; he had asked for things before.

Now, whatever might be said, no one could accuse the Man at Solitaria of not giving the matter sufficient thought. For months during the summer he sat out on the platform of his box, in the baking sun daytimes, and through the close, airless Indiana nights, looking down the tracks between train times, and considering the question. He saw clearly they did not recognize the power and importance of the man they were wronging. He knew perfectly well, for instance, that any time he chose he could turn the switch to the side-track and stand an express train on its head in the ditch. That would be fascinating, certainly. Indeed, he considered the proposal seriously for a number of weeks, and figured carefully on what train he would better take; but finally thought better of this plan, too. It would only stop one train, which wasn't what he wanted at all. The Man at Solitaria felt

the responsibility of his position; he decided to run the whole railroad himself.

Of course, he recognized that there would be opposition to this scheme on the part of the president and directors of the road, and the division superintendent,— especially the superintendent,— the Man knew the division superintendent. But that railroad must be run right. As a first step in that direction the Man saved up money and laid in a large supply of canned meats; he also secured two forty-four caliber revolvers and half a dozen boxes of cartridges.

Of course, the management of the Great Western Railroad didn't know what was going on in the mind of the Man — especially as he carried on most of his communication with human beings by telegraph. It didn't care much, either, as long as he kept awake eighteen hours a day and watched the side-track and told them how it was occupied. Consequently, no one knew of his intention of operating the road, and no one knew or probably ever will know why he chose such an unpleasant day for starting it.

It wasn't unpleasant in the sense that it was rainy — it was merely hot. Along down the track the heat rose in great zigzags, where the yellow sun beat down and baked a crust over the surface of Indiana. There was not a breeze in the air, not a sound except the occasional call of a quail from some distant rail fence, or the cry of a seventeen-year locust in a dead tree. On the sunny side of the station at Solitaria the thermometer took its stand at 118 degrees, and refused to be moved, and the air was a semi-solid mass of cinders.

The Man at Solitaria made up his mind he would shut down his railroad at six o'clock. He laid in a good supply of water and loaded up his revolvers; then he shut up the station and made a kind of barricade of old ties around his telegraph instrument, and sat down inside and waited.

No. 64, the fast freight from the West, was due at 6.10 o'clock to draw up on the siding. No. 24, the fast express from the East, was due at 6.17. At 6.03 the Man telegraphed the station east that the freight was on the side-track and the main line was clear. The freight was not yet in sight. At 6.13 it reached the station,

hurrying to make up lost time, and ran off the track; some one had turned the switch half way. The big engine jumped the rails, crashed up on the station platform, and stopped, without being overturned; three cars went off with it. The brakemen came running up along the train, and the engineer and fireman climbed down out of the cab, swearing and looking for the operator. Just then the express could be heard rushing along from the east, and two brakemen started up the track to head it off, on the dead run. At 6.16 the train appeared in sight. When she came around the curve and saw the freight she just stiffened right out and slid. It wasn't quite soon enough, however. She struck the freight cars just before she came to a stop, smashing a cylinder and nearly jerking the heads off the passengers. All the windows and doors of the coaches flew open with a slam, and the train hands and passengers began to swarm out like hornets out of a hornets' nest. The trainmen started forward on the run to see what was the matter and to look up the operator and find out what he was trying to do.

The Man opened a window in front of the station, with a revolver in his hand, and told them that what he was trying to do was none of their business. He was operating this damned road now, and he wanted them to understand it. Besides, he didn't want them on his platform. By way of emphasis, he fired a couple of shots as close to their feet as he could without hitting them. They got off, and he shut down the window with a bang. Somebody went around and tried a window in the rear, and he fired two shots through the glass. It was just as well they didn't try it again, for he would have nailed them the next time.

Then the trainmen went off to a respectful distance and discussed the situation, and the passengers retreated behind the coaches. The Man sat down and telegraphed that the express had gone by, but that No. 64 had a hot box on the side-track, which might keep it there for some time, so that No. 31, the westbound freight, had better be sent along. He would hold No. 64 for it. So No. 31 came along. It nearly paralyzed the passengers of the express train when they heard it on the line, but the brakemen stopped it all right in time to prevent it from landing on the back of the coaches.

By this time the station at Solitaria presented an unwonted and active scene. Three trains were huddled up around the place, two of them tangled together in a heap. The engine of No. 64 stood up inquiringly on the station platform, like a big dog waiting to be let in. The trainmen and the passengers still stood around and discussed ways and means and swore at the Man and the infernal heat. Several times they had tried to approach the Man, but the Man at Solitaria was unapproachable. A big passenger from the West had declared he would go up, anyway, as a little thing like that had a comparatively mild effect on his nerves, and a small passenger from the East had tried the effect of kind words and moral suasion; but the big six-shooters of the Man had an equally discouraging effect on both.

In fact, the exhilaration of running a railroad was beginning to exercise a strange fascination on the Man at Solitaria. This was only natural, after all. The way he ran things was a good deal like firing railroad trains at a mark, with the certainty of hitting it, if nobody interfered. He recognized, however, that there was need of great discretion and intelligence in the matter. The train despatcher was already making the telegraph instrument chatter like a sewing-machine, asking the station to the west what had become of the express, which, of course, the station west didn't know.

The Man sent word down the line that a brakeman had come into the station and said there was a big wreck at a culvert three miles west. It was a bad wreck, with a great many killed, and the wrecking train should be sent at once. The train could run right by his station to the place, as the line was clear. In fifteen minutes the wrecking train was drawing out of the Centerville station, seventeen miles east, with all the doctors that could be raised in the vicinity, and coming down the line sixty miles an hour in a halo of hot cinders. If it hadn't been for a line of brakemen stationed up above the curve, there would have been a great opening for young doctors in Centerville. As it was, the train stopped so short on the curve that the front trucks of the engine ran off and the one passenger coach was jolted full of a mixture of frightened doctors and medicine vials.

By this time the Man had been operating the road for an hour

and a half, and the excitement of the thing was growing intense, especially among the disgruntled officials he had superseded. Trains were beginning to stack up at the stations east and west, waiting for developments, and the train despatcher was beating such a devil's tattoo on his instrument, trying to find out what was going on, anyhow, that the Man used up a great deal of patience and ingenuity trying to soothe him. As for the division superintendent, who had come on the wrecking train, his hair was rapidly growing white. But, as long as he could not effect a compromise with the Man, there was nothing he could do. The Man was engaged at present furnishing information on Solitaria to the outside world, and it was futile to try to conceive what his rich imagination would prompt him to do next. On the other hand, the freight engine on one side and the engine of the wrecker on the other cooped up the only able engine on the track, and made advance or retreat impossible as long as the wrecker couldn't turn to and haul itself up on the track. But the Man refused to compromise. The division superintendent finally gave it up and started overland for the next telegraph station, ten miles away.

In the meanwhile matters were coming to a desperate crisis in the parade before the station at Solitaria. It was growing dark. Under the circumstances there was cause for excitement, although there was a line of brakemen, armed with lanterns, stretched out half a mile either way. It was generally agreed that the lamps in the cars should be left unlighted in deference to the opinion of the women, who thought lights would afford too good a mark, supposing the Man should decide to turn his attention to a little target practise. The engineers and express messengers lit theirs, however, and the headlights on the two middle engines were started, and threw a yellow glare on the cars before them. The Man paid no attention to matters of this kind, so long as he saw they did not interfere with his plans for operating his road.

About this time a couple of brakemen put their heads together and, getting in back of the tender of the express engine, began to fire chunks of coal through the window at the Man when he was telegraphing. They figured that it would make the Man mad and that he might exhaust his ammunition upon the tender. It did set him going for awhile, and the sound

of smashing glass, the crack of the revolver, and the spat of the bullets up against the tender roused considerable interest, especially among the women. Then the Man made up his mind not to shoot any more; they couldn't do him much harm, anyway, from behind the tender, and he decided to devote no more of his official time to them. So they knew no more about his supply of ammunition than before. Besides, the thing was beginning to be too much for the women in the cars, who got an idea from the noise that something was going on or was about to, and the conductors called the brakemen off. They were afraid they might get the Man too much excited.

As it got darker, however, the ideas of the men on the outside began to crystalize. About everything possible had been tried and failed. At 8.30 o'clock a determined minority decided to go gunning for the Man. It seemed a rather inhuman thing to do, but there was no knowing what was going to turn up. It was really a case of self-defense. Accordingly a messenger was sent across the fields to a farmhouse for a shotgun.

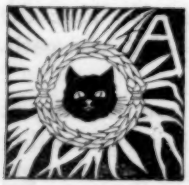
At this time a ridiculous thing happened. The Man went to sleep. This seems incredible until it is remembered that he had been up very late the night before arranging the schedule for his road. As for the men on the outside, they thought at first he was merely leaning forward over his instrument; then some one suggested that he might be asleep, but the crowd was against him, the popular theory being that he was probably playing some trick. The beams of one of the headlights streamed in the front window of the station and showed him very plainly. He made an interesting, if not entirely charming picture in the yellow light,—especially his white face and his straggly black hair. If he had made the slightest move the crowd would have seen it; but he didn't. So after he had lain perfectly still for ten minutes many said that they were comfortably sure that he was really asleep. A young physician who watched him awhile said they couldn't wake him with a club,—it was one of the peculiar symptoms of what ailed him,—and suggested that now was the golden opportunity for those whose business it was, to gather him in without the slightest danger to themselves. There was a long and unanimous silence, during which the theory of subterfuge on

the part of the Man gained ground. Finally the doctor said he would be one of two men to go in after him; a freight brakeman said he would be the other. They went to the rear of the station and opened a catch in a window where a piece of coal had broken out a light, raised the sash, and crawled in. The crowd kept watch of the Man, prepared to yell if he stirred. But he didn't stir. The two men crawled up behind the barricade, around in front where the headlight streamed in and jumped. Then the crowd came through the front windows, and the Man was gathered in.

Now this is the plain and unvarnished tale of how the Man at Solitaria ran the Great Western Road. There is no probability that he will resume the management. Nevertheless he inaugurated one improvement for which the traveling public should be grateful. The new Man at Solitaria has an assistant.

The Compass of Fortune.

BY EUGENE SHADE BISBEE.



A FEW days after his return to New York from twenty years' prospecting in South America, Alfred Leighton found the following letter at his hotel: —

"BUENA VISTA, TARRYVILLE-ON-THE-HUDSON, April 26, 189–.

"*Dear Alfred:* A moment ago, to my astonishment and delight, I ran across your name among yesterday's hotel arrivals. I won't waste words in telling you what pleasure this news gives me, but write at once to ask you to come up here with bag and baggage, so that we may talk over old times and compare notes as to how the world has used us since we parted thirty years ago.

"Telegraph when you are coming, and I will meet you at the train.

"Yours, as of yore,

"MELVILLE BARRETT."

For a moment after finishing the letter Leighton stood dumfounded, his mind swiftly gathering up the threads of long-forgotten experiences and friendships. It was now almost thirty years since he and Melville Barrett had chummed together at college, but the letter and the signature were enough to recall the brilliant, luckless fellow who had been Leighton's roommate during the latter's senior year. As nearly as he could remember, Barrett, in spite of his mental gifts, had never got on in the world, and, at last accounts, had gone West where he had dropped out of sight apparently for good and all. And now, behold, he had turned up again in the character of a landed proprietor! Had Barrett at last struck it rich?

Five hours later when, after a drive in a well-appointed landau

through a winding avenue, the carriage stopped at a big colonial mansion, and Leighton was ushered into an imposing hallway, carpeted with oriental rugs and decorated with tropical plants and curios from many lands, his mind recurred to the same question. And during the dinner that followed, served by well-trained servants, in a tapestry-hung dining-room, and the hour spent examining the rare plants in the adjoining conservatory, Leighton found himself varying the question by the mental inquiry, "How had Barrett struck it rich?"

For an answer to this question he had not long to wait. As the two men sat together before the open fire in the library, over their Havanas and after-dinner coffee, reviving the experiences of years ago, Barrett suddenly exclaimed, turning to his companion: —

"I suppose you are surprised to find me, at last, a property holder, instead of the luckless, poverty-stricken chap you used to know. Very likely, you've been wondering whether I have fallen heir to a fortune." Then, hardly noticing his friend's evasive answer, he continued: "I have come into a fortune, but not through the death of friend or relative. In fact, the manner in which it was gained was so extraordinary that neither I nor the friend who shared the adventure have cared to speak about it. And people simply know that, like so many others, we struck it rich in the land of gold. But you, who were the companion of my college days, and so know that I never took any stock in the supernatural, will, I am sure, believe what I have to tell you, especially as I hold the proof. If its duplicate can be produced by human hands, then I am ready to accept any commonplace explanation that the maker may offer.

"The whole thing is as great a mystery to me to-day as when it happened, eighteen years ago. My friend Mitchell and I had been hunting in the mountains of Southern California for a couple of weeks, and were returning by easy stages to the stock ranch where we both were employed. One evening, about the third day of our journey, we made camp in one of the most picturesque spots in all that beautiful country. A deep green valley stretched before us, high, snow-crowned mountains on either side, while far away down the silver stream that flowed through the valley could

be seen the undulating country of the grape and orange — a full hundred miles away.

"Mitchell had finished his duties as cook, and we had despatched a delicious supper of broiled venison, potatoes, and coffee, just as the sun was sinking beyond our vision. The camp fire gave forth a cheery glow as we sat and smoked our pipes, recounting the day's sport; while every now and then the stillness was broken by the deep howl of a gray mountain wolf,— a blood-chilling sound even to an old hunter, and thus altogether different from the bark and yelp of the coyote of the plains. Twenty years ago the Sierra Nevadas were alive with game, and many a time have I sat by the ashes of our fire on a morning early, and thrown stones at an inquisitive black-tail deer, undismayed by his first sight of man. On this evening, however, after we had finished our smoke and looked after our horses and pack-mules, we rolled in our blankets, and, with saddles for pillows and our heavy sombreros covering our faces, were soon asleep.

"My next conscious thoughts were of warmth on my face, and I sat up suddenly to find the sun just above the treetops. Giving Mitchell a rousing slap on the back, I set about getting a fire, at which task he joined me a moment later. Soon we had started a tiny blaze, but the dew-damp wood would not catch according to my fancy and I stooped to blow it. It caught, and I raised my head. As I did so I saw the strangest figure that ever met my eyes.

"At first Mitchell did not see it, for, though near, it stood just behind him. But as my look of amazement caught Mitchell's eye, with a 'What the devil is the matter with —?' he turned his head; and the words died on his lips. What had so astonished me was nothing more nor less than the form of a man, but a man whose like I had never seen nor imagined. In the first place he seemed to be at the very least seven feet high, and, even shrouded as he was by the folds of his odd costume, magnificently proportioned. He was garbed in a flowing gown of white, wound around by a broad crimson sash, into which were stuck two daggers and a long curved sword with a handle of gold set with jewels; while a huge turban of oriental fashion, snow-white like his gown, crowned his head. Beneath the turban gleamed two eyes, small, but piercingly brilliant, while the lower part of

the dark oval face was half hidden by his most remarkable feature, a moustache, jet black, and as long as the horns of a big steer — a comparison which its graceful curves still further suggested. What finally riveted our attention, however, was neither the man's garb nor his features, but an object that he held in the curve of his right arm."

"And that was —?"

"Nothing more nor less than a human skull, of a size that seemed to indicate a man of even larger stature than the one before us. All these details flashed upon my mind like an image on the sensitive plate of a camera, but before I could have counted twenty with deliberation, he placed the skull upon the ground, and then, straightening himself up, pointed with one outstretched hand over my head, as though indicating something in the distance. Naturally, we both turned in the direction of that gesture, but seeing nothing unusual in the landscape, faced about again towards the figure. Then we looked at each other in blank astonishment. The man had vanished as completely as a soap bubble bursting in air!"

"Hidden?" said Leighton, laconically.

"Impossible; our camp stood in a perfectly open glade, at least two hundred yards from the nearest tree, so he could not possibly have reached a hiding place in the ten seconds our heads had been turned.

"As we stood there dumfounded, our eyes scrutinizing each other, the plain, the sky overhead, and finally the ground, Mitchell gave a cry of astonishment.

"'Why, there's the skull!' he exclaimed. 'The man was real after all.'

"Sure enough, there was the skull, lying on the ground scarcely two yards from where we stood. For a moment neither of us stirred. Then with a common impulse we rushed forward and together raised the grewsome souvenir from the ground. At first it seemed much like any human skull except that it was unusually large, and polished so that its top glistened like a billiard ball. As we turned it around, however, a cry of astonishment broke from both. The eye sockets were not empty, but contained a pair of the oddest sort of eyes. They were perfect in shape and

expression, and though carved from what seemed to be deep blue glass, looked almost too lifelike for pleasureable contemplation. But what added to the uncanny effect of the lidless blue orbs was the fact that they moved, being evidently set on some sort of bearing. So weirdly fascinating was the strange object that the sun was high before we could compose ourselves sufficiently to sit down to our morning meal; and even then our conversation was entirely of the skull and of the strange visitor who had come and gone so mysteriously. In comparing notes we found that our remembrance of that visitor's dress and appearance agreed to the minutest details. Consequently if there had been any delusion it was one in which both had shared. But if the experience had been a delusion, how account for the skull? From time to time we glanced toward the spot where we had placed the uncanny object, half expecting that, too, would vanish. But no. It remained just where we had left it, its top glistening in the sun, its lidless blue eyes gleaming with an almost human expression. As I looked, for perhaps the twentieth time, at the grewsome thing I observed that the eyes were turned toward the left, and seemed gazing fixedly at the hillside above our camp. Seized by a strange idea I arose and turned the skull in the direction of the hill towards which the eyes looked. They stared straight ahead. Then I turned it in the other direction, and, to my astonishment, they looked towards the right. To make sure, I slowly turned it from one side to the other, and all the while the eyes kept their gaze riveted on the same spot. I had called Mitchell to observe the experiment, and he laughingly suggested that the skull was looking for the man who brought it there and then deserted it. But I was more serious. I had an idea concerning this strange phenomenon and was resolved to test the matter to the end. Holding the skull in one hand, I walked forward, every now and then turning the skull, whose eyes always turned in the same direction, as the needle of a compass points toward the north. I had in this manner gradually approached the hill, when it seemed as if the eyes had actually taken on a more intense gaze, and that that gaze was directed to a particular portion of the rocks which seemed to form a small recess. I moved forward more rapidly, the eyes continuing to stare at this place until I had reached the recess itself. The

next moment I found myself within a natural enclosure, surrounded on three sides by precipitous rock, so steep as to be almost barren of vegetation, save here and there a clinging vine. Again I looked at the skull. Beyond a doubt its deep blue eyes were directed towards a particular portion of the rocky wall marked by a small depression, shaped like a diamond. Setting the grewsome thing upon a flat rock, I purposely turned the side of the jaw toward the point where the eye had been directed, and breathlessly awaited the result. Slowly, steadily, those lidless eyes turned until they rested again on the diamond-shaped depression."

"And Mitchell?" said his hearer, "did this convince him?"

"Not at first, for he remained near our fire, watching my movements still with an incredulous smile. The smile faded, however, when a moment later I called him to my side and saying, 'Watch the eyes and tell me what you think,' began turning the skull slowly around on the flat rock. The eyes held their focus on the diamond-shaped incision, and I stood up and confronted my friend.

"'Well,' said he, and this time his accent indicated great agitation, 'I believe you are right, and there's some mystery here; let's get to the bottom of it. I'll go to the camp for an axe.' Ten minutes later he returned with the only available tool we possessed, and I began hacking feverishly at the rocky wall, keeping the mark upon which the eyes were riveted as our guide. Before long we had a big slice of the rocky soil cut away, and Mitchell had just taken his turn at the work, when his axe suddenly buried itself in what seemed to be a soft shell of rock, the momentum throwing him flat on his face. The next moment a section of the earth, quite six feet each way, gave way, revealing to our astonished eyes a deep excavation. In the bright light of the morning sun which shone full upon it, lighting up its interior to the rear wall, it seemed about fifty feet inward."

"A sort of cave?" said Leighton.

"Yes, but one made by human hands, as we discovered as soon as we crossed the threshold. The walls were cut and carved in many curious devices, while around the three sides ran a shelf cut in the rock, on which reposed many bones piled in regular heaps.

A glance revealed the fact that they were human bones, — we were in some prehistoric sarcophagus. Presently, as our eyes became accustomed to the subdued light, we began to look about us more closely. I was examining a pile of bones at the end farthest from the opening, comparing them with the skull in our possession, when, finding them apparently of the usual size, I tossed a thigh bone carelessly back on the shelf. It struck the pile with more force than I had intended, and they all came tumbling to the floor; but as they fell they revealed what appeared then, and subsequently proved to be, a crystal casket. It was about eighteen inches long by six high, and a foot wide; and, as I took hold of it, it moved with my hand. Carrying it to the opening I set it down in the light. Then, for the first time, I saw that it was filled with a blue substance, whose nature I could not clearly make out, owing to the dust and dirt covering the case. Upon examining the lid I found that it was not hinged but simply set on over the top. A quick jerk brought it away, and there before our staring eyes lay a huge heap of blue stones, all cut, and polished to a dazzling brilliancy.

"'Sapphires!' cried Mitchell, and his eyes bulged from his head.

"'Are you certain?' I asked, almost breathless from amazement.

"'Absolutely,' he said. 'Look at them,' and he took a handful of the beautiful stones. 'You never saw glass like that.'

"I thought as he did, but, being no judge of such things, was not too ready to let my hopes soar, only to be dashed to earth again. There must have been at least two pecks of them, ranging in size from a small pea to stones as big as the end of my thumb,— and all perfectly cut. Suddenly, as we stood gazing incredulously at the gleaming stones, my thoughts flew to the skull, and I ran to fetch it. As I brought it into the light I saw that its gaze was now riveted on the casket, the lidless blue orbs seeming actually to gloat over the piles of blue stones. A new thought flashed through my mind. Could it be —? Yes — undoubtedly — the eyes that we had thought only bits of blue glass were themselves sapphires, but larger and finer than any in the casket.

"Well, Mitchell and I were practical, first of all. As soon as we had recovered from our amazement we made a thorough search of the cave. Finding nothing more, however, we took ourselves and our precious burdens to the camp, and that very night we started for San Francisco."

"And the stones proved really sapphires?" said Leighton.

"Sapphires! I should say so. The leading jewelers to whom we showed a few specimens upon our arrival in San Francisco, two days later, pronounced them gems of the first water, and gladly paid us twenty thousand dollars for sixty of the smaller stones. Upon parting company we divided the sapphires equally between us, and since then I have visited every capital of Europe, in each of which the stones have been pronounced flawless."

"And that's how you struck it rich?"

"Yes, but so far I have converted less than half of them into money. The remainder I have placed in the casket in a New York safe deposit vault, but the skull —"

As he spoke he gestured toward an ebony cabinet just above his head. There, behind a glass door, stood a huge skull, whose lidless blue eyes, looking out toward the distant city, seemed to pierce every obstacle between itself and the casket of sapphires over which it still kept watch and ward.

A Surgical Love-Cure.

BY JAMES BUCKHAM.

ONE dull, gray afternoon in November I was sitting in my office in Raymond Square, deeply absorbed in an article in my *Medical Journal*,— the description of an experiment conducted by a famous French surgeon for the purpose of determining whether sight could be restored to a blind person by engrafting the live nerve of a dog's eye upon the shriveled and atrophied nerve of the patient's eye. So engrossed was I in the fascinating details of the experiment that I did not hear the door of my office open, nor was I aware of the presence of a second person until a peculiarly deep-toned, rich, and musical voice broke upon my ear.

"Have I the honor of addressing Doctor Marston?"

I looked up, and saw before me a tall and graceful young man, smooth-shaven, and dressed in the characteristic clerical garb of the Church of England. His face was singularly handsome, of the clear-cut Grecian type, and was lighted by a pair of large, thoughtful brown eyes. With the exception of the mouth, the whole face was both intellectual and spiritual; but there was a certain fulness and sensuous curve of the lips which suggested a strongly emotive and possibly passionate nature under this calm and priestly exterior.

"Yes, I am Doctor Marston," I said, replying to the young clergyman's question. "Can I be of any service to you?"

"On one condition — possibly," replied the young man, taking the seat which I indicated, and fixing his thoughtful brown eyes searchingly upon mine. For a moment we sat gazing intently at each other, and then I said, somewhat abruptly: —

"I beg to know the condition, sir."

"It is this," he replied; "that if I entrust my case to you,

you will promise to keep it entirely secret, scientifically or otherwise, until after my death, should that occur before your own. And, in any case, you must agree never to reveal my name in connection with the affair."

For some moments I sat turning over this peculiar proposition in my mind, conscious all the while that the brown eyes were fixed patiently, but anxiously, upon my face. At length I replied: —

"I have never as yet been called upon to undertake a case guarded by such secrecy as you seem desirous to throw about your own, and, to be frank, I dislike to commit myself to any transaction of the sort, — at least, until I know something of the nature of the trouble and the reasons for suppressing any mention of it. This much, however, I will agree to do. If you will describe the nature of your disease, I will then decide whether I ought to accept the case on the conditions imposed. Whether I accept or refuse it, I will agree to keep the matter a total secret, except so far as your own proposition gives me liberty to speak."

A slight smile flitted over the young clergyman's face. "Very well," he said; "I accept your word of honor, as a gentleman should, and will proceed at once to describe the malady which has, perhaps justly, awakened your suspicions. To come at once to the point, then, know that, impelled by your well-deserved reputation as an anatomist, I have applied to you to perform a surgical operation *for the cure of love-sickness!*"

I started, the suspicion that flitted through my mind mirroring itself unconsciously in my dilated eyes.

"Ah, no!" exclaimed my companion seriously, reading the tell-tale revelation of my face. "I am not insane. My mind is as clear and logical at this moment as it ever was in my life, and the request which I make, a little reflection will prove to you, is not only reasonable, but scientific.

"First, however, let me state to you the circumstances which make me desirous to rid myself of the passion which I have confessed, thereby anticipating the question which is sure to rise to your lips. You are aware, of course, that the High Church movement in this country, as well as in England, has resulted in the formation of certain brotherhoods of the clergy, bound

together by vows more or less approaching in strictness those which govern the clergy of the Church of Rome?"

"I was not aware of the fact," I replied, as the young clergyman paused for an answer.

"It is indeed so," he continued. "You will not be surprised, then, to know that by the vows of the Brotherhood of St. Michael, to which I consecrated myself soon after the days of my novitiate, celibacy is as strictly enjoined as upon the priesthood of the Church of Rome."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, carried away by some sudden feeling, which I cannot even now defend. "The more fools —"

But here I stopped, the great brown eyes with something like a flash of Olympic lightning piercing and enchaining mine. In another instant the deep, rich voice proceeded: —

"For ten years I have kept every vow of the brotherhood referring to woman, without a single spiritual struggle — wearing these restraints as Samson wore his chains. But something less than six months ago I met a woman —"

The young clergyman paused, throwing his head back against the green baize of the easy-chair in which he sat. For a moment I thought he had fainted, and sprang for a cordial; but, without taking his slowly opening eyes from the ceiling, he motioned me back, and continued, while an indescribably sweet and almost transfiguring smile lit his pale face: —

"A woman, said I? An angel! A vision of transcendent loveliness! She came into my life as a new star comes across the disk of an astronomer's telescope, shedding its undiscovered light from eternity for him alone. O my Ethel! My angel! My lips yearn toward yours, my arms grope out to clasp you! — My God! What am I saying?"

The young priest sprang from his chair and stood trembling before me. His face was livid with the exercise of some tremendous mental effort, and I could see that the white nails of his clenched hands were driven deep into the flesh. For a full minute he stood thus, and then his strong frame relaxed, and he sank back into his chair, white as the paper on which I write, and weak as a babe. This time I pressed the cordial to his lips, and he did not refuse it. Presently he looked up with a faint smile,

and said, "Now, sir, you see what my malady is. I have no need to describe it any farther."

I stepped to the window and gazed up into the gray sky, as if looking for a solution of my perplexity. But my mind remained as blank as the dull expanse above the city roofs. Was this man insane, or was he really, as he said, in his right mind? Could the force of a mere amorous passion for a beautiful woman so carry away one of his character unless the man's mental integrity was impaired? I turned suddenly, in response to the young clergyman's voice. He had risen, and was advancing towards me.

"Do you believe in phrenology, Doctor Marston?"

"Most assuredly I do not."

"Will you perform an experiment upon me to test the reasonableness of your doubt?"

"Do you mean by that, will I assume your case surgically?"

"Exactly."

I turned to the window again. Here was certainly an opportunity to contribute something to the discussion of a vexed scientific question. Are the functions of the brain localized in its structure? So say Gall, and Spurzheim, and not a few other eminent anatomists. Well, every practical experiment looking towards the solution of this question has its value. Here was a strong, vigorous man, evidently possessed by the amative mania. It would be an operation of little difficulty and no great degree of danger to uncover the occipital protuberance at the base of the brain, where phrenologists claim that the organ of love is situated, and then —

"Well, will you take the case?"

The clergyman's hand was on my shoulder. I turned and looked him squarely in the face. "Is it understood that you assume all the risk, and that you do not hold me responsible for the psychological result of an experiment which, so far as I am concerned, is purely physical in its character?"

"Certainly. We will have it so understood."

"Then you may call at my office to-morrow morning at eleven. Eat a light breakfast, and, as far as possible, avoid excitement of every kind."

It seemed strange instruction to be giving a clergyman; but the young man understood and nodded approval. In a few minutes he took his departure, and I returned to my *Medical Journal* — but not to read.

Precisely at eleven o'clock the next morning my singular patient walked into the office. I at once remarked upon his changed appearance. His face looked haggard, and there were heavy, dark rings under his eyes, appearing almost black at the inner corners of the lids.

"I have seen *her*," he explained heavily. "She was at All Saints Chapel this morning. It was impossible for me to retire, or I should have done so. I had to fight my desire to look at her, to speak to her. I had to fight like a wild lion, and it has told on me, as you can see. But, thank God, it is over now!"

"I hardly think you are in a fit condition to endure a surgical operation," I objected.

"For God's sake, do not put it off any longer, doctor!" exclaimed the young clergyman, clutching my hand. "I would rather die than endure another day of such moral agony."

"Very well," I said; "I do not consider the experiment a dangerous one in any case — only exhausting."

Five minutes later my patient, divested of coat, vest, and collar, lay stretched on the operating table. In five minutes more he was under the influence of ether.

My first procedure was to shave the dark, soft, silken hair from the lower part of the young man's head. I then made two V-shaped incisions with a lancet at the base of the skull, where phrenologists locate the organ of amativeness, and raised the flap of skin from the skull. The next thing was to get at the brain itself, and this I accomplished by boring two fine holes through the skull with the smallest trephine known in surgery. The portion of the brain thus exposed, I was amazed to find, was in a highly inflamed condition. Instead of attempting to relieve the surcharged brain with any instrument, I now placed a leech at each orifice, and allowed a considerable amount of blood to be thus withdrawn. I then dressed the wound antiseptically, and closed it with sutures.

My patient soon came out from under the influence of the

anesthetic, but appeared very weak. I lifted him in my arms and carried him to the couch in my private room. Enjoining strict quiet, and, if possible, sleep, I left him alone for a couple of hours. At the end of that time, considering it safe to permit him to talk, I reentered the room with considerable curiosity, not to say agitation, and asked him how he was feeling. To my astonishment, he grasped my hand warmly, exclaiming that he would consider me his greatest benefactor as long as he lived. "For," he cried, "you have saved my soul from its otherwise certain ruin. Thank God! I feel now no more emotion at the thought of that woman than of any other of her sex."

I brought my patient some refreshment, and at three o'clock he left my office in high spirits, promising to return again the next day to report upon his condition.

For three weeks the Rev. Alexander Maeck — as I will call my clerical patient — haunted my office every day, and we became fast friends. During all this time he was entirely free from disturbing sentiments. The flames of love, he declared, were quenched, and he was supremely happy.

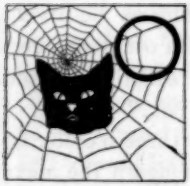
So favorably, I must confess, did this experiment dispose me towards the neglected science of phrenology that I at once began to direct my studies in that direction, and soon accumulated a large number of expensive books on the subject. I also began to write up the details of my experiment, so as to get the matter into permanent shape while it was still fresh in my mind.

About six weeks after the occurrences above related, and just after I had posted an order for several hundred dollars' worth of phrenological works, the letter-carrier came into my office and presented me with a large, square, cream-colored envelope. I tore it open carelessly, removed the enclosure from the inner envelope, and bent over two beautifully engraved cards which fell upon the table. They bore the names of Rev. Alexander Maeck and Miss Ethel Plympton.

The wedding was a strictly private affair; and perhaps the most remarkable thing connected with it was the fact that the would-be annihilator of Cupid was permitted to kiss the bride.

The Williamson Safe Mystery.

BY F. S. HESSELTINE.



ONE morning in the spring of 1894, the attention of persons walking along Sudbury Street, Boston, was attracted to a huge iron safe that was being put out from the warerooms of a well-known safe company, which for many years had done business on that street.

The way was blocked, and all passage by cars and teams prevented while a number of men, with great effort, by the aid of blocks, rollers, and windlass, drew the huge mass of iron onto the platform of a stout dray by which it was to be transported to its destination.

Of course passers-by wondered and queried as to the purpose and possible use of a safe of such unusual form and dimension. But the curiosity of the questioners remained unsatisfied; no one standing by knew, and the merchant with his employees was too busy to answer those who ventured to interrupt with their inquiries.

This much, however, was evident: the safe was not new; indeed, the style and appearance of it indicated that it had been built many years ago for some special purpose, in which it had doubtless seen long service. Altogether the appearance of this strange object so excited my curiosity that, although I was in a hurry to reach my office, I waited until the thing was finally loaded and moved slowly off up the street. Then I entered the store of the safe company, and, being well acquainted with the manager, I asked if he could give me the old safe's history.

He replied that there was a strange story connected with it, known now only to himself. For certain reasons it never had been known except to two people, and they had been sacredly bound, one by personal interest and the other by a solemn vow, never to divulge the secret. "This promise," he said, "has been faith-

fully and sacredly kept; but now all those in any way connected with or affected by it have passed beyond the dark river. The safe, which has stood here for many years like a specter, reminding me of the dead past, has now, to my great relief, vanished forever, and I know no good reason why the strange story should not be told. While I may withhold or change names in the recital, that which I am about to relate is true, and is capable to some extent of verification.

"More than fifty years ago a stranger of good appearance, whose speech and manner indicated that he was of English birth, entered the shop of one Kershaw, a manufacturer on the corner of Chardon and Green Streets, in this city, inquired for the proprietor, and stated that he wanted constructed a strong, fire-proof safe, giving the description and dimensions desired. By his conversation he appeared familiar with such work, and stated plainly how he wanted this constructed and the kind of lock required,—the keyless combination not having then been invented. In answer to inquiries he said that he was about to open a jewelry store in Hanover Street,-that he did not intend to do a retail business, but would carry a considerable stock for wholesale, visiting for trade dealers in neighboring cities. He added, also, that as he would be absent from his store from time to time, he desired a safe of large dimensions where his stock could be safely stored during his absence, as well as at night. He required no shelving in the safe, and wanted it of unusual depth, that he might put directly into it the cases and trunks in which he would keep or carry his stock.

"Being convinced of the stranger's responsibility by a large advance deposit, and by the promise of full payment on completion and delivery, Mr. Kershaw accepted his order, and in due time the safe was completed and delivered. Soon after a sign was put up on the store,—'J. Williamson, Wholesale Dealer in Watches and Jewelry.' No great display was made in the window. Goods were received and shipped by the rear entrance opening on an alley-way. Apparently, but little business was done at the store, and frequently Mr. Williamson was absent visiting his customers, or buying additional stock in New York City. He contracted no indebtedness, paying cash for everything.

He expressed a lack of confidence in banks and bankers, saying that he had once lost a large sum by the failure of a bank in which he deposited, and for the future should be his own banker.

"Shortly after he began business he took up his residence on Sheafe Street in the North End of the city, and attended regularly the Baldwin Place Baptist Church. No subscription paper or contribution box ever passed him without a fairly liberal donation.

"In disposition he was quiet and retiring, and rarely spoke except in response to some inquiry. His earlier life he never referred to except in reply to one or two persons who ventured the question, when he briefly stated that he was the second son of a well-to-do English squire, that at an early age he found that there was no future for him in the old country, and that when little more than a boy he came to New York where he acquired a knowledge of business, and by diligence and economy saved enough to start in business.

"Within a year after his arrival in Boston Mr. Williamson sought the hand of the eldest daughter of a respectable merchant, a deacon in the church which he attended, producing at the same time letters from New York indorsing his worth and character. Having thus satisfied her parents, he was accepted and with little delay married. Very soon after he was received, on profession of his faith, into the church, and by his quiet, correct life, liberality, and honest dealing, secured the confidence and respect of all who knew him.

"About this time a strange epidemic of crime swept over the Puritanic city of Boston. The houses of the wealthy were entered and robbed of their valuable contents. Packages of money were boldly seized within the very enclosures of the bank, the thief escaping through some passageway or by fastening behind him the door through which he escaped; the satchels of bank messengers, filled with valuable contents, were suddenly snatched, and the robber eluded pursuit. At night persons were garroted and robbed on the public street. The police force was small and, although they exercised unusual diligence, every few days some new and startling crime, committed with wonderful skill and boldness, was announced. It was thought that a gang of ex-

perienced criminals had made a descent upon the city so long exempt from crime, and every stranger was under suspicion and carefully watched.

"One night, not long after his marriage, Mr. Williamson was found on Charlestown Bridge in a dazed, exhausted condition, and assisted to his home. When sufficiently recovered he stated that while crossing the bridge he was suddenly seized from behind, his throat grasped so that he could not cry out, and his pocket-book, containing a large sum of money, taken from him. He struggled to free himself from his unknown assailant until he gasped for breath, and fell exhausted, unconscious.

"On the following day Mr. Williamson offered a liberal reward for the arrest of the highwayman, but as he had not seen him he could give no clue to aid in the detection of the criminal. Some of the persons robbed, however, who had caught a glimpse of the thief, described a dark person with heavy black hair, wearing blue glass spectacles; and, as it was believed that he and the assailant of Williamson were one, search was made for a person answering this description.

"One evening the whole city was startled by the news of a crime just committed, bolder than any that had preceded it. The store of Davis & Palmer, jewelers on Washington Street, had been entered between the hours of seven and eight P. M., and the most valuable part of their stock taken, the trays containing many valuable watches, diamonds, and jewelry, having all been emptied. As was customary, the store was closed at seven o'clock and a night-watchman came on duty within an hour after. On this evening when the watchman entered he found the cases stripped of their valuable contents and immediately gave the alarm. The police were sent for and an investigation began. It was soon discovered that persons near the store had seen a sleigh drive up, a man alight, unlock and enter the store. Not long after he came out bringing two heavily laden bags, one after the other, which he placed in the sleigh and drove away. At the time no suspicion had been excited, as there was nothing peculiar about his manner of entering or leaving the store. From his course of action the thief was evidently well acquainted with the fact that there was a brief period between the closing of the

store and the arrival of the watchman; and, having at some time, doubtless, obtained an impress of the key and made a duplicate, the task of entering and robbing the store at a time when it was least expected was an easy one.

"In those days there was no detective force or special police to investigate crime and capture the criminals. The attention of the few policemen employed by the city was given wholly to the preservation of order, and to preventing a breach of the peace. There was, however, a force of a few constables who served civil processes and worked as private detectives for a reward, headed by an old experienced officer, Captain Darius Clapp; and when it was known that a large reward had been offered for the discovery and return of the goods irrespective of the arrest and conviction of the criminal, Clapp devoted himself at once to that object. As a first step he visited every stage-office, stable, vessel, and mode of egress from the city, but to no purpose. The owner of the sleigh was found, but could give no information except that it had been hired in the afternoon by a dark-haired man wearing colored glasses, and that late in the evening the team was found without any driver in Haymarket Square.

"As weeks passed and the mystery seemed no nearer a solution, the strange robbery became the universal topic of conversation. Every clue and suspicion was followed up. Strangers were arrested and obliged to prove their innocence. Everybody became a detective.

"Some weeks after the robbery, a stranger came to the express office with a trunk which he wished transported to New York. Something in the manner of the man, an unnatural, half-disguised appearance, excited the suspicion of the alert, sharp-eyed express agent, who had been cautioned by Captain Clapp, and while he proceeded to make out the receipt he secretly sent a messenger to the constable. Upon his arrival that official instantly began to question the stranger, demanding to know the contents of the trunk. His inquiries were frankly answered with proper explanation, and the key produced that the captain might verify the same by examination. The innocent frankness of the stranger disarmed the constable, and, half apologizing for not accepting his statements as sufficient, the captain stooped to unlock the trunk, when

suddenly the stranger leaped by him and out through the door, barring it after him by thrusting a stout cane through the iron handle. Throwing himself against the door the captain soon broke the improvised bolt and rushed off in pursuit, following the fugitive down through Dock Square, Marshall, and Hanover Streets, into a narrow court leading from the last street, where the man had disappeared. But though there was no outlet other than that by which he had entered, a thorough search of this place a few moments after failed to discover the fugitive, or the way of his escape. After the houses opening on the court were searched without discovering any trace of the probable thief, the proprietors of the stores fronting Hanover Street on each side and having rear entrances, were sent for. Among these was Mr. Williamson, but as it was ascertained at his residence that he was absent from the city, entrance was gained to his store by a side window. Here, however, as in the other stores, no person or sign of one was found. The burglar, for such an examination of the trunk at the express office proved him to be, was never captured, nor was trace of him discovered, although diligent search of that neighborhood was made by the whole police force.

"Not long after, the city was again startled, this time by the announcement in the morning papers of the mysterious disappearance and probable murder of Mr. Williamson. He was known to carry large sums of money upon his person, and as there was no good explanation of his absence, it was thought most probable that he had been robbed and murdered. In fact there were some who reported hearing at night cries for help in the vicinity of his store, and a hat which had been found one morning on the street near his store, proved to be one worn by him on the morning when he last left his home.

"Information was sought by advertisement in the newspapers with promise of liberal reward, but all investigation proved unavailing.

"After some weeks of vain inquiry and search, the general suspicion that he had been murdered and his body thrown over the Charlestown Bridge became a settled conviction; but his faithful, trusting wife refused to believe him dead, and her father finally proceeded to New York to see what information, if any, could be

gained from those with whom his son-in-law had had dealings in that city.

"What he ascertained there I do not know, but immediately on his return he came to my employer for a workman to go to the store and open in his presence the safe containing the stock stored therein. After some drilling the bolt was sprung and the door swung open, disclosing a sight at which I started back affrighted and amazed, and which so horrified the troubled and anxious father that he fell like a dead man on the floor. There within the safe lay the dead body of Mr. Williamson, the trusted and respected jewelry merchant!

"On recovering consciousness, the good deacon, heart-broken, implored me for his sake and the fair name of his daughter never to make known the sight then revealed, and to assist him in concealing all evidence which would tend to disclose it. To both these requests I at once consented, and that night I helped him to carry out the body privately for burial — no matter where.

"An examination of the safe disclosed a hardly discernible aperture drilled through the back near the top, from which, on the inside, hung a flexible tube by which respiration was made possible for a person enclosed, and through which noise from without could reach the inmate.

"On the inside of the door a hole had been cut so that the key could be inserted and the bolt thrown. The handle of this key had broken off, leaving the key in the lock. There were indications that food and water had been stored in the safe, but none remained; even the shoes bore marks of the teeth, as if gnawed for sustenance. A black wig and blue glass spectacles lay on the floor of the safe. Seeing all this, we soon conjectured for what purpose this safe was made and used — a temporary place of quick retreat. We wondered if the key was broken by accident in the haste to elude that last pursuit, or in attempting to re-open the door. We thought we knew now, though each was silent, the mystery of the many recent crimes; but one thing was certain, they ceased and the author of them was never found or arrested."

How Small the World.

BY E. H. MAYDE.

I.

THE letter of Mr. Robert Fairfax to the Rev. Arthur Selbourne, Innasittie, Colorado:

MANCHESTER, July 24, 1892.

Right you are, Old Hoss, and no mistake. Europe was a great lark — all the better for having been as unexpected as a wedding fee in advance. I'm mighty glad I've seen it all. I used to be afraid that foreign scenery would make that of home seem tame in comparison. It has, on the contrary, been rather enhanced for me, and New England continues to stir my aged blood as nothing else does.

I stopped over a day in New York, and dined with Ellis, who told me about poor Jack Simms. Awfully sad case. Of course you know he was eager for the operation — it really was the last hope — and went into it with the greatest amount of pluck and nerve. Ellis is interne at St. Luke's hospital, and was with Jack all the time, and, up to the last day, believed he'd pull through; but it was no go. Jack's life was insured for ten thousand dollars, and his wife's uncle had just left her thirty thousand dollars. So he had the comfort of knowing she was provided for. It's a lucky thing, for she has weak lungs or something of that sort. It strikes me that women as a race are pretty delicate in spite of their modern fad for athletics.

I saw Adams and Lennox Vandewater in Boston. Van looks rather peaked. Adams says he's just made his annual proposal to the girl he's been in love with for six years (nobody knows who she is) and she has rejected him again. Van never recuperates in less than three months, so Adams has consented to go across with him, and they're going to bike about England during August

and September. Adams's legs must be a better match for his head than they were in college.

I've run down here for a week with my mother and sister who are at the Masconomo. Have strolled along the shore this afternoon, and wish you were here to enjoy this comfortable ledge of rock and the strong salt air, and to talk over old times. I put a writing pad in my pocket, and the faithful fountain permits one side of a conversation at least. I'm confoundedly sleepy, however, — don't grin like a dog when you read that, — and think I'll stretch out and take a snooze, in the hope of imparting a little brilliancy to my style.

Evening. My dear fellow, I am madly in love. Fact, and you may as well take it seriously. I went to sleep, as I intended to, and dreamed I was discussing methods of executing criminals with your wife, when, in reply to some remark of mine, she said, "I always use a kitchen knife." Then some one laughed and I woke up. Then a Voice — such a *delicious* voice — said, "Don't grin like a dog," and I thought I must be dreaming, for it was all mixed up with you, and you know I had just written those very words. Then the Voice went on, "Billy said it was inane, but I didn't care, for the result was just as good as his." Then followed a most amusing talk, which must have lasted fifteen minutes. You need not put on a look of professional disapproval at my eavesdropping. I pledge you my word, I hadn't the faintest idea I was doing it until it was too late. You see, I was half asleep and half awake at first, and when I discovered that I was all awake I hadn't the nerve to get up and apologize for being there, and walk away. It would have been as embarrassing for her as for me. Besides, though she was talking confidentially to some woman friend, she hadn't said a word which there was the slightest objection to my hearing, so I thought best to lie still. I was completely hidden by the ledge, though she couldn't have been six feet distant. It was immensely amusing. The Voice was relating her experiences in keeping house for some one she called Billy on "the ranch" — location unknown. For a long time I thought "Billy" was her husband, and it seemed to me he ought to be a happy man, for she called him a saint (not the canonized kind; she meant a brick), and she said Billy called her a better

cook than his mother. But it turned out that Billy is her brother. He's married now, and she apparently dotes on the 'twins.' Once they — *i.e.*, the Voice and Billy — had a Mr. Adams to dine with them, and as he was from Boston I think it may be our Adams, and, perhaps, through him I can get a clue to her identity. You think this is all nonsense, but I assure you I'm in dead earnest. She's the most interesting girl I've ever seen — or ever haven't seen — for I know little enough about her appearance. I looked over the ledge after they'd gone away (they couldn't see me) and saw them walking off towards the road, and she wears tan shoes and a blue dress. I'm going forth to hunt those articles to-morrow. Why shouldn't I be the happy man I supposed Billy to be?

I pity Van more than I did when I began this letter.

If Adams's reply is favorable, and I find her and she'll have me, I'll send for you to come on and tie the knot. You may impart this information to your wife (I know you can't keep it to yourself), for she once told me that she took comfort in the most incipient stages of love-making, because there was always the possibility of a fee ahead. My best regards to that mercenary woman. Yours, BOB.

P. S. What do you suppose she uses a kitchen knife for? It must be something unusual.

II.

The letter of Mr. Winthrop Adams to Mr. Robert Fairfax, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts.

BOSTON, July 27, 1892.

Dear Fax: — Sorry enough to hear of your accident. A sprained ankle is no joke. Thought you were the most sure-footed of men.

I append the memorandum you ask for of all the Williams of my acquaintance. Are you writing a paper on The Influence of Christian Names on Christian Character? And, if so, why in thunder don't you begin at the other end of the alphabet?

Van and I sail on the second. He's dumpier than ever before. What a girl she must be to refuse a million, and Van thrown in! Yours, WINTHROP ADAMS.

Memorandum. (Ages only approximate.) William A. Curtis, fifty, lawyer, widower, New York; Wm. B. Slater, twenty-six, physician, bachelor, Iowa; Wm. Thorndike, thirty, merchant, ?, Charleston, S. C.; Wm. Martin, forty, teamster, married, Boston; Wm. Berkeley Vandewater (our Van's father); Wm. (generally called Billy) Posey, (colored), seventy-five, janitor, Boston; Wm. Winthrop Adams, my three-months'-old nephew, still unmarried, Boston.

I don't recall any other Williams whom I have met within the last two years.

III.

The telegram of the Rev. Arthur Selbourne to Mr. Robert Fairfax, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Mass.

INNASITTIE, COL., August 2, 1892.

Probably uses it instead of a fork.

A. SELBOURNE.

Collect.

IV.

The letter of Miss Polly Forsythe to Mrs. Arthur Selbourne, Innasittie, Col.

PRIDE'S CROSSING, July 24, 1892.

My dearest Lucie: — I have the most delightful and most disgusting things to tell you. First to the first. Of course you know all about poor Nannie Simms's trouble and about her husband's death a month ago, at St. Luke's Hospital. Perhaps you do not know, however, the only gleam of comfort in the whole sad affair — that she has a very comfortable fortune. Old Mr. Dupuy left her thirty thousand dollars, and when poor Jack died it was found that his life was insured for ten thousand dollars. It is *so* fortunate, for she is all alone in the world, and not a bit strong. Of course she's perfectly heartbroken, but she's just as brave and sweet as you might know she would be. She says she can never be sufficiently thankful for this year they've had together. You know at one time there was talk of postponing the marriage for a year, and when Jack was taken ill he reminded her of that. She sent for me immediately, and Carrie was quite

well, so I came right on. I really think it's better now that she and Billy and the babies should be by themselves. They have a very good servant, and a nice motherly woman for a nurse. But this is a digression. Jack's family dote on Nannie, and they all want her to go and live with them, but she says she couldn't bear it just yet, and so she has asked me to be her companion for a year, until she feels able to decide on her future.

Dr. Ellis, an awfully nice young surgeon, and a college classmate of Jack's, has been just as kind as he could be to Nannie. He says she mustn't stay North this winter, but we haven't yet decided where we are going; perhaps to Florida, and perhaps abroad. We came down here a week ago, and it is perfectly enchanting, but we are going away to-morrow on account of the horridest thing that happened this afternoon. Now, Lucie, before you read another line you must *promise* not to breathe a word of this to Arthur. Well, this afternoon Nannie and I walked down to the West Manchester rocks. We sat with our backs against a nice ledge and looked off over the quiet sea and talked for hours. When we got up to go I had an experience before which Robinson Crusoe's footprint on the sand sinks into nothingness. Right on the other side of the ledge against which we had been leaning I saw, not a footprint, but a foot. Two feet, in fact, and attached to them two legs. All, evidently, the property of *a man*. I felt as if every drop of blood in my body flew into my face, but I never said a word to Nannie until we got back to the road. Then she looked around, very carefully, of course, and there was that disgusting creature looking over the ledge at us. Did you ever know *anything* so horrid? If I'd only his legs to judge by — that was all of him I saw, because the rest of him was hidden by a rock — I should have thought him a gentleman, for he wore fine russet shoes and blue trousers. I never want to see that combination again as long as I live. But no gentleman *could* have done so rude a thing as to listen to a long conversation like ours. I dare say you will think this is funny, but I'm sure you won't laugh when you hear the rest of the story.

What made it so *perfectly dreadful* was that Lennox has proposed to me again — for the sixth time, my dear,— and I was telling Nannie all about it. Of course, Lennox Vandewater's name is

as well known here as Jay Gould's or George Washington's, and you know how perfectly horrid men are, and how they always think girls boast of their offers. And you know, too, Lucie, that you and Nannie are the only living souls that know about that affair, and that Lennox told Nannie himself. And you, dear thing, never would have known it at all if you hadn't overheard his first proposal, and that ridiculous declaration that he was going to repeat it annually until I accepted him or married some one else. Dear me! I never imagined then he'd keep his word. I do really think the constancy of man is awful.

Of course, now you'll want to hear how it happened, and I suppose you might as well know. Lennox had something to do with the company in which Jack's life was insured, and he came to see Nannie several times on business. Of course he saw me, but somehow his manner was different, and I really thought he meant to be just nice and friendly. Once or twice I saw him alone, but he never even *looked* at me in a way to make me suspicious, and always before that when we've been alone together — well it has been

"The embrace of pining eyes,"

all the time. The last afternoon he called — with some papers and things for Nannie — she was in bed with a headache. He explained the business matters to me, and then we actually *talked politics* — not a word of anything else, I assure you — for half an hour. Then he told me he was going to Boston that night by the Fall River Line, and bade me good-by. But just as he reached the door he turned around as if he'd forgotten something, shut the door, put his back against it, and said, "Polly, will you be my wife?"

I was utterly taken aback. "Lennox," I said, "how long do you mean to keep up this absurd performance?"

"It isn't a complimentary way of alluding to my offers of marriage," he replied calmly, "but I intend to repeat them until you are engaged."

"Then," I said desperately, "I will be engaged to the very next man that offers himself to me.'

"How good of you," said he, "to afford me such unexpected

encouragement. I will be that happy man, Polly." And with that he dropped on his knees and said, "Polly, *will* you be my wife?"

Now, Lucie, of course, this was perfectly ridiculous, and who could imagine Lennox Vandewater behaving so? I don't know what made me do what I did, except that I had been under a severe strain with Nannie, and was rather unstrung, but instead of laughing I burst into a fit of hysterical crying. Lennox came to his senses — and his feet — immediately. When I got myself pulled together again I thought we might as well "have it out" then and there, and I prayed that I might say the right thing. I told him how much I admired him, and valued his friendship, and that I had really, honestly tried to love him, but I couldn't — in that way. I told him about the imaginary scenes I had gone through with him, in which he announced his proposed departure to South Africa as a missionary (only I really think Lennox isn't an ideal missionary), and that I had always gone through the parting without a pang. I told him I longed to hear of his marriage; and I was going on to use further arguments to convince him that I didn't love him, but at this point he said, "Well, I guess you needn't rub it in any more, Polly," and I looked up and saw that his face was quite white. I can't tell you the rest, but — I don't think Lennox will propose to me again, though we — well, we "parted friends."

Now, my dear Lucie, THAT was the tale I told to those russet shoes. . . . Was ever anything so — oh, words fail!

And Nannie, you know, has always believed I some day would marry Lennox, so it was about as hard to convince *her* that I couldn't love him as it had been to convince him. Luckily, it didn't take six years in her case; though, if it had, those russet shoes would have starved to death instead of living to tell the tale. That would have been some comfort. After all this conversation Nannie was so "low in her mind" about my affairs that I put forth my best efforts at entertaining her, and actually made her laugh telling her about Billy's and my experiences on the ranch. And then the whole day was spoiled by this awful discovery. I'm sure I know now exactly how a woman feels when she finds the long-looked-for man under the bed. This,

my dear, is the end of the tale of woe. And quite time, too. It will make a hole in my salary to pay the postage.

I'll send you a postal when we are settled in some secluded spot where shoes and trousers are unknown — and the wearers of those articles.

Meantime, I am thinking more about myself than ever before in my life. Every morning when I unfold the paper I expect to see in enormous headlines:

DISCOVERY OF L—N—X V—D—R'S
BEST GIRL,
OR
DID P—Y F—S—E
REFUSE HIM SIX TIMES OR SEVEN?

Good-by, you dear, sweet, patient, long-suffering woman. Arthur little imagines how much I've contributed towards making you a model wife. Your dejected POLLY.

V.

That part of Miss Forsythe's conversation overheard by Mr. Robert Fairfax.

To Mrs. Nannie Simms: — *I* always use a kitchen knife. Don't grin like a dog. Billy said it was inane, but I didn't care, for the result was just as good as his. You see we had no end of fun experimenting with all sorts of things. The ranch was twenty miles from the nearest town, and I 'got my hand in' at almost everything from cooking to carpentering. We even painted the house in the most artistic style, mixing our own colors. It was *such* fun, ladling up little dabs of paint from a circle of cans, and stirring up the mixture. We were trying to get a red like the cover of my prayer book. And we did it, too. We had only one kind of wall paper, and it required 'treatment.' It was a pretty bluish gray, with scraggly daisies on it. We painted one room in olive green, floors and woodwork, and that killed out all the blue, and gave us a gray and green apartment. And another room, painted in dark brown, brought out the blue and gave us a blue room.

Then the cooking was a great picnic. You see the most I'd ever done was to stir up the ingredients of cake, according to Miss Parloa and Mrs. Lincoln, and then — the cook baked them. What I wanted to learn was how to get a dinner for a hungry man. Billy was a perfect saint. You can't imagine what blunders I made, with no one to give any help. But I'd wade through it all again to know what I know now, and Billy says I'm a better cook than mother.

One day we had a narrow escape from a tragedy. An accident on the railroad had delayed our supplies a week. Meantime we had to live off the country, and such things as we could get at 'the store.' Well, I was going to have fishballs for dinner — Billy loves them. I didn't know how codfish shrinks, and I put on what I thought was enough, and when it came out of the water it had wizzled up into a little worm. However, it made six fishballs, and I thought we were all right, but when Billy walked in, — brotherlike — without warning, with Mr. Adams, of Boston, — did you know about his coming out to the ranch? — I had what Mrs. Stearns used to call "an inward spasm." I made a mental inventory of the contents of the pantry while I was expressing my joy at meeting Mr. Adams — it *was* a joy, too, — and I thought of "the woman who hesitates." I went into the kitchen and put those six fish-balls — they weren't fried — back into the bowl, and mixed them all up together. Then I made them over into nine, just as big round, but thin to the point of emaciation. In the hen house I found five nice fresh eggs, and I fried these, and "garnished" the platter of fish-balls. And we had potatoes, and good bread and butter, and coffee, and I really believe Mr. Adams thought he had a fine dinner. He said the meal was a "taste of Boston." We went hunting the next day, and Billy shot a wild turkey, and that time we did have a dinner. Billy was quite proud of my shooting. He taught me to use a rifle, and we had fine times together. Then the evenings were delightful, sitting in front of our great fireplace, and reading aloud; and afterwards music by the firelight. It was just as nice after Billy married and Carrie came. She fitted in beautifully, and they are very happy. And the twins are darlings, the sweetest things. Really, if I begin on them I shall

talk till night, and you must be tired to death now. Let's walk towards home.

Oh! I — I turned my foot. It's all right now. Come along — this way — there! Give me your hand; that's it. I was just going to say that —

VI.

Mrs. Arthur Selbourne's good-night remarks.

To Mrs. Jack Simms.— You are really growing fat, Nannie, dear. I was sure this Colorado air would build you up. Yes, it is a lovely country, with a charm that is all its own. Something of life will come back to you here — if only added strength to bear its pain. Good-night, dear; sleep well.

To Miss Forsythe. — Yes, Dr. Ellis and Mr. Fairfax are coming to-morrow. Nannie really seems to look forward with pleasure to meeting another of Jack's old friends. You know she has never met Mr. Fairfax, though she's heard so much about him. How much better she seems! You have been the best tonic she could have had.

I want to caution you about one thing in regard to Mr. Fairfax. He, of course, only knows your brother as Poindexter, and he has m — m — m — er — associations with the name of Billy, so I wouldn't use it before him if I were you — that is, if you happen to remember — it isn't important. Good-night.

To Mr. Selbourne.— I'm glad they're coming by the afternoon train, everything is so lovely in that light. And I'm satisfied about the rooms. Men are always easy to entertain. I wish we could get that man up from Denver, for the piano is dreadfully in need of tuning, and I do want to have some good music while they are here. You know Nannie — Arthur, are you asleep? *Well!*

VII.

IN THE CANON.

Miss Forsythe and Mr. Fairfax.

Miss Forsythe.— Yes, of course. But ever since the great baseball game you have been one of Billy's heroes, and —

Mr. Fairfax.— *Billy's?*

Miss Forsythe.— Oh, I beg your pardon. "Poin," I meant to say.

Mr. Fairfax.— But why did you say "Billy"? And who is Billy? And why did you beg my pardon?

Miss Forsythe.— Billy is my pet name for Poin. You know he went to Williams, and was so fond of it I called him Billy. Almost all my friends before that were Harvard men.

Mr. Fairfax.— But why did you beg my pardon?

Miss Forsythe.— I — Mr. Fairfax, forgive me if I hurt you, but I can only explain by telling you frankly that before you came, Mrs. Selbourne cautioned me — I don't know why — against using that name before you. She said it held associations for you — and I thought —

Mr. Fairfax.— You thought?

Miss Forsythe.— That perhaps there was some one you had loved — and lost —

Mr. Fairfax.— No; not that. I am inclined to think the associations are with some one I have loved and found. I will tell you that story some other day. Meantime, you were saying —?

VIII.

THE RECTORY DINING-ROOM.

Mrs. Selbourne, Mrs. Simms, Miss Forsythe, Mr. Fairfax, and Dr. Ellis, all intently regarding a large box that has just been brought up from the express office.

Mrs. Selbourne. —We can't open it until Arthur comes home, for he has the key of the tool-closet in his pocket, and the cover is screwed on.

Miss Forsythe.— Oh, yes, we can. *My* screw driver is never to be found, and I always use a kitchen knife.

Mrs. Selbourne (aside, to Mr. Fairfax, as she passes him on her way to the kitchen). — This only means that I am a mercenary woman, and take comfort in the most incipient stages of love-making.

Mr. Fairfax.— To me it means that you are an angel.